6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

story to explain the non-appearance of the others which satisfied the *chefe*.

The catechist was somewhat criticized for not having pushed on with the case, and thereby perhaps getting Guilherme landed in jail. Guilherme did move out of the village in February and settled near the outskirts of the Protestant village of Kalungwengwe. Kapapelo also set about moving out of Epalanga.

In the conflict which has just been described, there are three disputes, the question of the bridewealth which involved Luciano, Simbwyikoka, Guilherme, and the anthropologist, the quarrel between Paulo and Guilherme, and the subsequent uprising against Guilherme which takes its signal from Paulo's reference of the dispute to the priest.

The question of bridewealth repayment is subordinate to, indeed enclosed within, the main dispute. It does illustrate one point central to the problem of Umbundu social control, the absence of any court machinery. Jeremias and Luciano had tried to recover it by appealing to the priest; later Luciano and Simbwyikoka attempted to get it back by coming and demanding it, that is by self-help. Another extremely significant aspect of the social structure is revealed by this 'enclosed' case. Guilherme after a bitter dispute with Paulo which has ended in the arrest of Paulo and Bartolomeu borrows 200 escudos from them as a kinsman. This indicates that kinship ties can survive and function despite a quarrel which they do not check or prevent, a point which will be developed later in an examination of how kinship affects and is affected by a dispute.

The conflict cannot be viewed as simply a dispute between individuals, nor as a dispute between the holders of opposed roles. Guilherme was generally regarded as lacking 'sense' (*olondunge*), the quality, greatly admired by the Ovimbundu, of good judgement and decent social behaviour, and he confessed himself to be at fault. Yet he could not have acted in the way he did unless he had been a government headman, nor would the uprising against him have taken the form it did had he not held an office dependent on the post. There is, however, no necessary conflict between a government headman and the catechist or

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

elder of the school in the sense that there is no sphere where their duties overlap and where they must compete.

The roles of government headmen and of officials of the school are complementary. It is through the chief and the government headman that the Ovimbundu pay their taxes and fines, are recruited as contract labourers and are called to road service, are arrested for crimes and misdemeanours and are entered on official records. It is through the catechists and elders of the school that the Ovimbundu find the expression of village unity by which at the same time they are linked to the whites and to the rest of the world on the religious level. The missions bring the Ovimbundu closer to the whites than does the administration, without the administration's predominant interest in making demands.[5]

While at the level of the total Angolan political system the administration is more powerful than the missions, the position of the catechist or elder of the school is stronger at the local level because the catechist and the elder represent the catechetical school which is the only social grouping existing on a village basis, whereas the government headman in fact represents no social group but is simply an executant of the orders of the *chefe*. Hence the catechist owing to this representative role and to his contact with the mission (which is much closer than that of the government headman) can lead the people and invoke the aid of the mission against abuses on the part of chiefs or government headmen. This would not be the case if the post gave firm backing to its local agents and turned a deaf ear to communications from the missions. Opposition to an overbearing government headman is then likely to be led by the leaders of the 'school', who can count on the backing of the mission, if they have a good case, to intervene for them at the post. The relative importance in a village of the catechist and elder of the school varies according to such factors as personality. The way in which the catechist was ignored when he tried to intervene in the dispute over the bridewealth shows that the catechist cannot claim authority in disputes as a matter of course.

[5] The missions impose fees and a yearly levy on their adherents which are small compared to the official taxes.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

The transformation of the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo into what amounted to both a trial of, and an uprising against, the government headman is not purely accidental but is a natural consequence of the principle latent in the social organization by which the 'school' leaders complement and can check the chief and government headman.

The case also indicates the limited nature of their roles. Both Paulo (by preventing Anna's marriage) and Guilherme (by getting Francisco sent to contract labour) can strike at the other through the lawful exercise of their authority; any real attack on the other's position involves an appeal to either mission or post, and hence brings about a trial of some sort. Guilherme finding that the quasi-trial before the priest went against him, tried to bring the case before the post, but realizing that this also was likely to go against him came to terms with his enemies. That is, any determined attempt to solve a dispute is likely to involve at least the threat of a reference to the post or the mission.

The power of the priest to intervene in the actions of the agents of the post is limited. Thus Antonio Pires did not intervene in the case of Francisco but advised him to get a letter from his employer. It is, however, notable that the missionaries are not simply appealed to by Catholics. Protestants like Jeremias and Luciano, and pagans like Kasosi and Sapapula, were ready to appeal to the priest although the initiative came from Paulo. That this is so is a convincing argument for the claim which has been made that the catechetical school represents the whole village, although it could also be claimed that it reflects rather an aspect of 'civilized'-native relations in the total Angolan system, clientship, as the typical form of relations between the two groups, with the missions being the patrons *par excellence* to whom all natives are at least potentially clients. The general well-being of all natives is the concern of the missions, who are therefore liable to be appealed to in such cases as this.

In particular cases where there is another patron to appeal to his aid will be sought. This patron-client situation will crop up again in the account of subsequent disputes. Its origin historically lies in the history of attitudes to employees and to

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

627 servants in Portugal and Angola;[8] sociologically it reflects the
648 lack of any system of bureaucratic administration at the local
571 level and the isolation of the *chefes* from the people. The uncertainties of taking a case to the post are such that it is thought desirable to have some backing (such as the letter the catechist got from the mission) from a representative of the 'civilized' community and in the absence of any other 'civilized' person the mission becomes the patron of all natives, whatever their religious allegiance.

578 The importance of this case, then, is its illustration of what
627 may happen in a conflict between a catechist or elder of the
571 school and a government headman. The limited nature of their powers, and the fact that their roles are not competitive, make a conflict between them, so long as it is not extended to pull in other people, necessarily confined to indirect attacks. If either party wishes to bring down the other he must appeal to the post or to the mission. The government headman can pull people in by accusing them at the post of not paying taxes or creating a disturbance, or by recommending them for contract labour. His position is not so strong as his dependence on the post might suggest, since the intervention of the mission, at the request of the villagers, can bring him down.

Within this main 'political' dispute is the quarrel over bridewealth, which is illuminating both in indicating the absence of legal mechanisms at the village level, and in showing how kinship ties continue to function at the height of a bitter quarrel. Both these points will be noticed again in the accounts of later disputes.

3. *Kapapelo and Sapapula*

578 The next case involved Sapapula and Kapapelo and was
627 again to end in an averted appeal to the *chefe de posto*. On the 21st of February Sapapula, Sahuke (see List II, p. 56), Wasuka, Luanga (21), and others went from Epalanga to the house of Justino, who had called them there to settle a dispute. Justino

[8] An inhabitant of Lisbon, wishing to emigrate to Canada, wooed the maid of a former official of the British Embassy. Discovering that this would get him nowhere, he transferred his affections to the maid of one of the staff of the American Embassy. The implications are interesting.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

was a man of fifty or more, who lived in Portuguese style making money from coffee and other crops. He claimed to be an *assimilado* (African with the status of a Portuguese citizen) but in actual fact he was not one. He had employed a man called Kusumula, who lived in Epalanga and was the brother of Kapapelo's wife.

To appreciate the point of Justino's complaint, it is necessary to explain the significance of certain terms indicative of ethnic and social status. Otjimbundu is the singular of Ovimbundu, a people defined by the use of the Umbundu language. It is also used to refer to any black person (thus I was often asked whether there were Ovimbundu [i.e. Africans] in England), and is therefore equivalent to the Portuguese *preto* (black), which when used of a person has a rather pejorative sense like 'native' in other parts of Africa. Livingstone, writing a hundred years ago, remarks of one area in Angola; 'The people under him (the chief) are divided into a number of classes. . . . They are also divided into gentlemen and little gentlemen, and, though quite black, speak of themselves as white men and of the others, who may not wear shoes, as "blacks".'[1] Justino's complaint was that Sapapula had referred to him as a *preto qualquer* or in Umbundu (Sapapula did not speak Portuguese), *otjimbundu tjango*, a mere black.

Justino delivered a speech when the people from Epalanga had settled on the veranda of his house in which he declared with much force that he was not an Otjimbundu '*Ame sitjimbunduko.*' This accusation was based on information given him by Kusumula, who alleged that Sapapula had said to government headmen that Kusumula could be recruited for road work, as he worked not for a white (a term applied also to *assimilados*) but for a mere black.

I give the main lines of the ensuing argument. Sapapula denied that he had called Justino a black. Kusumula claimed that Sapapula was always picking on him. Sapapula declared that he had founded the village, and that Kusumula wanted to break it up. Kapapelo said that he had at one time given medicine to a girl and Sapapula had told Jaime to kill him because he might have seduced her. Kutenga Lusase, the chief

[1] Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 411.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

of Gumba who had also turned up, intervened and denounced Kusumula for not wishing to work for the post, and then brought the case back to Sapapula's alleged slander of Justino. The latter intervened again here to say that he had been slandered. Sapapula, by now very excited, denied this and said that Kusumula and Kapapelo wanted to break up the village. This was followed by three people trying to talk at once. Justino strolled round to the back of his house. Sapapula and Kapapelo wrangled.

Justino was not the only person to find this tedious. Paulo suggested that we should go. Kapapelo complained that Saviel, a sister's son of Sapapula, had made advances to his wife. Sapapula continued to declare that Kapapelo must not break up the village. Kutenga Lusase criticized Kapapelo for not working for the post. Gonçalve (18) intervened to refer back to the visit of the priest, Antonio Pires, and said that he had left with the words (i.e. he had come to a decision). Gonçalve was a pagan. The wrangling continued until Justino returned, told Sapapula not to insult him again and not to be angry with Kusumula. Sapapula said that Kusumula had left the village (Epalanga) and so would not be needed for the post again (that is, Sapapula would not be any longer responsible for him), and that he had never been angry with Kapapelo. Nahoka, Sapapula's wife, said that Kapapelo was not *ukwafeka* 'a man of the country'. Justino then dismissed the gathering, telling Sapapula to buy a bottle of wine for the elders who had come with him.

Kapapelo and Kusumula were not connected with the post as Guilherme was, nor with the mission as Paulo was. Kusumula was the employee of Justino and had thus an opportunity to appeal to him by accusing Sapapula of denying his status. It is not particularly significant whether Sapapula had actually said this or not. The accusation is important since it is a reflection of a common Umbundu way of attacking one's enemies, by accusing them of some offence against a 'civilized' person. Thus, to refer back to the earlier dispute between Paulo and Guilherme, the latter found it necessary to deny that he had planned to set fire to the catechetical school and the anthropologist's house, charges which were intended to weigh heavily with the *chefe*. Hence, when a quarrel between natives comes to a civilized

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

person, it is likely that the details will be re-organized to gain his attention and support.

It is also notable that Sapapula was ready to accept Justino's right to hold a case on the matter. The acceptance and even readiness (as appears later) on Sapapula's part that Justino should hear cases is partly again a result of the lack of any legal machinery on the village level, partly an aspect of the 'patron-client' situation which has so often marked 'civilized'-native relations in Angola. No doubt much in Justino's behaviour arose from the taste he showed at times for settling cases, which led to a certain number of local cases being referred to him, and his readiness to settle them may not have been particularly common among *assimilados*.

Much of the actual case consisted of accusations and counter-accusations between Sapapula and Kapapelo with other people intervening. There is a kind of attempt to establish a balance of wrongs, Kusumula claiming that Sapapula was always picking on him when there was a call for labour from the post, Kapapelo accusing Sapapula of inciting Jaime to kill him and Sapapula's sister's son Saviel of planning to seduce his wife. Sapapula had accused Kusumula and Kapapelo of trying to break the village. Lusase intervened rather against Kusumula and Kapapelo, who was his 'brother'. As previously, the demands of the post for labour are regarded as being used by their local executants in a discriminating way.

On the evening of the same day, as I was calling round the village, I found Kapapelo at the door of Sapapula's kitchen. Apparently he had arrived drunk and had threatened to kill himself. Sapapula was greatly enraged at this, as were his women folk, Nahoka, his wife, Wumba, his daughter, and Nayangu, his 'sister', who vigorously abused Kapapelo. They warned Sapapula not to accept food from Kapapelo, lest the latter use it as a means of sorcery. Kapapelo complained that Nahoka had called him a slave thus expanding the hint contained in her previous enigmatic remark that Kapapelo was not a man of the country.

On the next day, Wednesday the 22nd, Sapapula had intended to go again to Justino's to settle his case with Kapapelo, but there was a funeral to which a large number of people went.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

427 Moreover, Justino did not want to bother any more with the case, and said that anybody who went on with it was just vindictive. It had been proposed to hold a moot at Sapapula's house, but this was impracticable as Kapapelo would not come. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 23rd February, a number of people gathered at Kapapelo's house. The gathering at first consisted of Sapapula, Sahuke, and Kafelo (the former chief) who sat close together joined by the anthropologist and his interpreter Pedro Chimbalanya Epalanga, two men from Menga, one of them a son of Sapapula, Nahoka, Nayangu, and Wumba respectively (as previously mentioned), Sapapula's wife, 'sister', and daughter, Lusase the *de facto* chief of Gumba, Ngombe the Mwekalia at his court, Alexandro a son of Mwehombo, temporarily visiting Epalanga, and four people from Ndjoleya's end of Epalanga, Augusto (25) (grandson-in-law of Sapapula), Costa (26), Ferreira (28), and Filemeno, who later moved to Belem. Other people turned up later, including Ndjoleya (30) himself. My point in quoting these names is to show that the crowd which turned up to the moot was not composed either of Sapapula's kin or of his co-villagers as exclusive groups.

Lusase was not received with any great respect, but bowed low to Kafelo. Ngombe explained that he had been invited as a guest.[8] Sapapula explained to Ngombe what had happened at Justino's. By this time Epalata, Luanga, Paulo, and Wasuka had arrived. Sapapula alleged that Kapapelo had wanted to seduce Nahoka, but that she had refused, and that Kapapelo had then wanted to kill him so that he could then obtain Nahoka. The conversation between Kapapelo and Nahoka had been in the woods so that he had no witnesses. Sapapula, who was now very angry, finished his speech by declaring that he had given land to Kapapelo. Meanwhile more people arrived.

Ngombe now spoke discussing the evidence and summing up very much against Kapapelo. Lusase spoke, avoiding the

[8] On another occasion, three elders from Gumba (one of them Simbwyikoka) were invited to Chicundo to arbitrate a case. Ngombe's appearance here in fact was not significant, except perhaps as showing the discrepancy between ideas about cases and the reality.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

question of Kapapelo's intention towards Nahoka, but criticized Kapapelo for reopening his quarrel with Sapapula. Kapapelo (who did not strike me as particularly intelligent) was wandering about more or less ignoring the criticisms which had been made of him, which greatly annoyed the assembly. At length, Kapapelo, urged to speak by Lusase, did so.

Kapapelo stated that he had committed adultery with Nahoka, Sapapula's wife, and asked to be fined for adultery. This created a fresh uproar. Nahoka got up and said that the question was within the competence of Lusase since he and not Kafelo was now the chief. She denied that she had committed adultery. As evidence against this, she pointed out that Kapapelo's wife had visited her house to eat mush, and that Kapapelo's conduct when he came to Sapapula's kitchen showed that she had not committed adultery. Antonio Kasoma (see List II, p. 55) said that it was necessary to decide how much Kapapelo should pay.

Kapapelo's wife joined in to support her husband's confession, saying that Kapapelo had given Nahoka soap. Sapapula declared that Kapapelo was worthless, and had received everything he had from Sapapula. Some people called on Kapapelo to work sorcery. Kafelo suggested that Kapapelo should pay 150 escudos (£1. 17s. 6d.). The meeting now broke up, some people saying that the post should be informed and that Kapapelo had (illicit) rum in his house. One of the Menga men said that in the past even attempted seductions were punished. Sapapula demanded a payment of 500 escudos or a big pig, for Kapapelo's offences of not showing respect to Sapapula, and attempting adultery. He seemed more inclined, however, to take the case to the post, since (he claimed) Kapapelo was threatening to kill him. Kapapelo refused to pay.

The argument now swirled round, Kapapelo wavering between paying and not paying, Sapapula wavering between going to the post and being ready to accept a fine. Kafelo and Lusase both favoured a payment. People said that Guilherme was responsible for this. Paulo, Kusumula and Ndjoleya all urged Kapapelo to pay. Sapapula had now moved off, and was eventually followed by everybody else. Various wrangles continued over the question of paying a fine or having recourse

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

627 to the post. Somebody said to me 'Lusase wants a fine to be paid so that he can get something from it' (the chief traditionally [681] having a right to commission on a fine paid in a dispute which he had settled). Eventually the dispute did not go to the post, as Kapapelo paid a fine, and the matter dropped.

A great deal of detail has been given here, but it can be shown that consistencies can be extracted from what seems complete confusion.

578 Kapapelo had, no doubt, as was said, under the influence of drink, decided to carry on his conflict with Sapapula after the gathering at Justino's and had arrived at Sapapula's threatening to commit suicide. The threat of suicide was here [762] used as Guilherme had used it to put an opponent in a difficult position, but it infuriated Sapapula, who decided that he must try and get another hearing. He therefore turned again to 627 Justino, although the latter had previously decided against him; thus implying that even a possibly unfavourable judge is acceptable, rather than let a squabble continue indefinitely.

Eventually, owing to Justino's refusal to hear the case, what I have called a 'moot' was got together, a body which lacked any deciding, dominating figure, but represented the local community. This became concerned with the question of the 578 relation of Kapapelo and Sapapula as affected by the action of Kapapelo in respect of Sapapula's wife Nahoka. As has been mentioned in the chapter on marriage, the relation between a [837] man and his wife's lover is one of mystically manifested hostility. Sapapula by accusing Kapapelo of desiring to seduce his wife was indicating a very serious state of hostility between the two men; and one can only explain Kapapelo's confession to something of which he was not guilty as a mark of his hostility to Sapapula. Kapapelo was accused by Sapapula of attempting to do him a grievous wrong, and Kapapelo claimed that he had in fact done this wrong. Nahoka denied that she had wronged her husband, and produced evidence of her assertion. Before considering her arguments, it must be noted what were the interests of the other people involved in the case.

627 It might be suggested that Kafelo, Lusase, and Ngombe had to some extent the function of judges or at least arbitrators, and Sapapula had indeed invited Ngombe to give his opinion (I

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

do not know how Kafelo and Lusase came to hear of the case). In practice, their role was that of any other spectator in trying to bring about a settlement, although a chief has, as was noted, the right to a commission on any indemnification. The right of spectators to intervene is not based on any particular relationship to those involved nor on any reputation for wisdom. There is in fact no organized routine for determining who may and who must turn up and who may and who must speak. Spectators and speakers are simply members of the neighbourhood community, some related to Sapapula, some simply fellow-villagers, and it is natural that in present Umbundu society, lacking clearly-defined social groups, the crowd that assembles on such an occasion should look like a chance gathering. Its lack of recognized procedure, of accepted leadership, and of specific criteria of recruitment are all typical of the neighbourhood community among the contemporary Ovimbundu.

Despite the 'unorganized' character of this gathering, there exists evidently a set of generally accepted symbolic values, which are accepted by Christian and pagan, by young and old. Thus Nahoka claimed as evidence that she had not committed adultery her meal with Kapapelo's wife, and the latter in turn offered as evidence that adultery had been committed a statement that her husband had made a gift of soap to Nahoka. These actions provide presumptive evidence of innocence or guilt since an adulterer or adulteress may not eat under apparently mystical sanctions with the spouse of the person with whom he or she has committed adultery, and the giving of gifts by a man to a woman implies a sexual relationship. These actions were presumably recognized as convincing evidence in the days when there existed a formal court system, and continue to be recognized as such at the present day.

The nature of contemporary social relations, as being the end-product of a series of acts between individuals rather than as the content of jural norms defined by status, is also revealed in the dispute, particularly in the episode at Justino's. Sapapula does not complain that Kapapelo had not behaved as a villager should to his headman, but that he had not been grateful for having been given land. Kapapelo's complaint that Saviel, Sapapula's sister's son, had attempted to seduce his wife was,

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

like his accusation that Sapapula had incited Jaime to kill him, an attempt to portray himself not as an ungrateful recipient of Sapapula's goodness but a much suffering victim of his malevolence.

Although the moot reflects the existing social structure and values there are occasional reminiscences of the former social system. Thus Ngombe seems to have been acting according to a traditional but non-effective pattern in giving a long, judicial, summing up, which had no practical effect. Again, when Sapapula accused Kapapelo of wishing to break up the village it is probable that he was thinking of the old villages socially defined by the agnatic tie and physically enclosed by a stockade rather than the physically and socially amorphous villages of the present day. Values such as these survive in the minds of individuals when the associated social forms have disintegrated. They are brought out on occasions analogous to those in which they were formerly used, but are not nowadays decisive in the way they would have been.

The quarrel between Kapapelo and Sapapula is different from the other cases, since the meeting held to discuss it is held without the presence of a 'civilized' person and it pivots about a question of adultery or rather attempted adultery, a subject which has hitherto appeared marginally as a subject for insults. The case is held without the presence of a 'civilized' person, and this is from necessity, not from choice. Sapapula had tried to have the case heard by Justino, and Kapapelo was eventually brought to terms by Sapapula's threat to refer the matter to the post. While the moot shows us the community acting to uphold social control, such action is regarded as an unsatisfactory substitute for a decision by somebody who could, as Gonçalve said of Antonio Pires, 'leave with the words', that is, settle the case.

Adultery has previously occurred as an accusation thrown in during a squabble that has begun with something else. Thus Guilherme accused Paulo and Wasuka accused Kapapelo of adultery because they were angry with them; they were not angry with them because they thought they had committed adultery with their wives. It is parallel to the suggestions that Kapapelo was a sorcerer, an insult not an accusation. It now

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

occurs, whether in intention as declared by Sapapula and Nahoka, as accomplished as claimed by Kapapelo, as the substance of the conflict between the two men.

To sum up, Kapapelo had originally been aligned with his kinsman Guilherme against Sapapula, who had then shown hostility to Kapapelo, and especially to his wife's brother Kusumula. The latter had counter-attacked by accusing Sapapula before Justino, and there the matter might have rested if Kapapelo had not tried to attack Sapapula again, by making the threat to commit suicide at his kitchen door. This led to the moot at which the charge of attempted adultery was made, and at which Sapapula intended to, and succeeded in, taming Kapapelo.

4. *Lusase, Sapapula, and Luanga*

In this case, individuals previously met, notably Sapapula, and Lusase reappear, this time as enemies. The principal scenes are first an attempt by a kinsman of Lusase's to recover a debt from Sapapula, secondly an attack by Lusase on Sapapula, thirdly a decision by the *chefe de posto* in favour of Sapapula, fourthly a fresh complaint to the post by Luanga against Lusase, fifthly a post decision in favour of Luanga, sixthly and finally reconciliation of Luanga and Lusase.

This chain of disputes had begun actually before the episodes mentioned in the last case. On the 19th February, Ndonga a kinsman of Lusase (whom he had helped to power), arrived in Epalanga and tied up Sapapula, as a result of the latter not paying a debt. I produced the money and for the present no more was heard of it. Lusase said that he did not know what went on in the villages, when the matter was mentioned to him.

On 13th May, Simbwyikoka, a former chief whose village was near Sapapula's, was holding a ceremony in which a bull had been killed. Sapapula had taken part in the ceremony and had been responsible for sending a leg of the bull (the chief's traditional prerogative) not to Lusase but to Kafelo, who, although he had been deposed in 1954, had the advantage over Lusase of having passed through the royal rituals, and

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

having been elected according to traditional rules. Lusase was angry at this, turned up at the ceremony, and attacked Sapapula.

The following morning Epalanga buzzed with indignation. Gregorio, the chief of Menga, and Mandumba, Sapapula's son, had arrived at Epalanga to express their support, and Gregorio asked me[9] to write a letter to the Mission to get its support against Lusase at the post. I said that I would go to the chief's village to persuade Lusase to seek a reconciliation. The elder Wasuka, a cross-cousin of Sapapula, declared that even if Lusase offered five cattle in compensation they would not be accepted, and Sapapula's supporters portrayed him as a much injured man, repeatedly the victim of the Guilherme, Kapapelo, Lusase, Ndonga clique. My offer to go to the chief's village fell through when we heard that Lusase was now no longer there, but near, apparently at Simbwyikoka's.

I suggested that the moot should be held at Simbwyikoka's since the case had begun there; the others said 'No, let him come over here.' The crowd settled down in the open space before my house. News was then brought to us that Lusase refused to come over and insisted on the people coming to him, declaring that he ruled all, and did not obey the anthropologist but only the *chefe*. Accordingly everybody got up and walked over to Simbwyikoka's. Here we leant that Lusase had fled. Kambungo[10], an elder of Menga and kinsmen of Sapapula, declared that somebody who behaved like this could not be chief. Gregorio the chief of Menga became involved in an argument with Ndonga, who he said was responsible for installing Lusase. This Ndonga denied. This, incidentally, was the first time that I had heard that Lusase was not properly elected. As previously noted on the fall of Kafelo, Lusase had arrived at the post and announced himself as being the new chief. The Gumba people did not protest about this for fear of possible reactions from the post.

It now became known that Lusase could not be found.

[9] It may be suggested that my interventions were not in accordance with anthropological etiquette. It is difficult to see what else I could have done; it is, after all, the local custom for 'civilized' persons to provide letters of recommendation, and a refusal on my part would not have been understood.

[10] He has been mentioned in Chapter V.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

People said that he had fled to the house of his sister's son Guilherme en route for the post; Gregorio now said to me that Lusase had made advances to Nahoka, trying to seduce her by saying that Sapapula was old.

On the same day Sapapula left for the post with, as his witnesses, Nahoka and Wasuka carrying a letter of recommendation from me. At the post the *chefe* took his part and told Lusase 'Sapapula is your father' and made Lusase kneel down to seek pardon. Sapapula said that he wished to move across the river into Menga, where he had formerly lived. The *chefe* told him to stay at Epalanga (because of the anthropologist's presence there), but transferred Epalanga administratively from Gumba to Chicunda. This settlement pleased the Epalanga people. It may be added that had Sapapula actually crossed over, a number of householders, including Paulo, would not have followed him.

Despite the *chefe's* acts it was not certain whether the change was to be given effect immediately or only after the *chefe's* annual visit; hence some more wrangling took place over the question of where Epalanga was situated for such purposes as the payment of fines for rum-brewing.

Luanga, who shared with Sapapula the title of Epalanga, came to my house on the night of the 27th June to ask for a letter to the *chefe de posto*. He told me that Lusase wanted to take away his title of Epalanga and send him to contract (non-voluntary) labour. I suggested that we should go together to see Lusase at his village on the following day. The next morning he decided not to go to the chief but to go straight to the post with his wife Adriana. He told me that when Lusase became chief in 1954, he and his 'brother' Mwehombo had bought the title of Epalanga (held under Kafelo by Sapapula) which they held jointly. Luanga had paid for this two pigs equal to 1,000 escudos (about £12. 10s. in British currency) and other things as well. Luanga's motive was not political power (which the present-day chief lacks and of which his ministers have even less) nor prestige, but because he would thus be exempt from contract labour. Luanga said that he did not mind going to contract labour, but insisted on having back what he had paid to Lusase. I said I would write a letter to say that he should not

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

go to contract labour and accordingly he left for the post with my letter.

Luanga returned quite satisfied a few days later, the *chefe* having decided in his favour. Two days later he went to the 578 chief's village to complain of Lusase's actions. With him came 631 Bartolomeu and Paulo. Ngombe, as Mwekalia, and thereby responsible for the relations between chief and people, acted as the presiding figure, more chairman than judge, although he spoke for some time on the case. Lusase defended himself by saying that it was not he but somebody else who had recommended Luanga for contract labour. This explanation was accepted by Luanga. Bartolomeu and Paulo received small sums of money from Lusase for acting as witnesses, and later Luanga left with Lusase for another village. Here they effected the succession of a man to his father's title of Mbesi (another ministerial position). Luanga was much pleased with his share of the fee.

578 Not only the personalities but many of the features of previous cases reappear here. Of the ways of acting which people choose, 627 Ndonga and Lusase use self-help, Ndonga to recover a debt, 648 and Lusase to uphold his prestige. Against Lusase, as against Kapapelo, a moot was formed. Lusase like Guilherme insisted on his responsibility to the post alone, when the opposition seemed to be using a 'civilized' person of a different category. Final decisions are obtained by appeals to the post but the risky nature of such procedures is shown by the desire to get a letter of recommendation. Luanga believed that Lusase had got him sent to contract labour just as Francisco believed (correctly) that Guilherme had got him recruited. Ngombe as Mwekalia is more successful here as arbitrator than in the moot at Kapapelo's. Finally we see the contrast again between the survival of formal recognition in symbol of the prestige of chieftancy (the episode of the bull's leg) and its actual impotence [634] caught between *chefe* and people. The specific issue in this dispute turns on a conflict between a chief and his people, and it shows how a chief can be defeated in the same way that the first dispute showed a government headman being defeated.

627 Lusase's opponents had, as previously, other means of influ- 648 encing the post. Gregorio had proposed getting a letter from the

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

mission to give Sapapula's case, and, as things worked out, it was the anthropologist who was made the 'civilized' focus for the opposition to Lusase as Antonio Pires had been made the focus of the opposition to Guilherme. Lusase, like Guilherme, reacted by saying that he owed allegiance only to the *chefe de posto*, and running off to the post.

Luanga's case shows how desire to get out of contract labour may give a new reason for taking a ministerial title, and also once again how sending someone to contract labour is regarded as a means of injuring those whom one dislikes.

I have spoken of the conflict between Lusase and Sapapula as being a conflict between a chief and his people, and this is true in so far as it shows how opposition forms against a chief and how he can be checked. It is therefore of importance as indicating the position of the chief in the contemporary social system. The people themselves interpreted the dispute as being essentially one between individuals—Lusase's behaviour was attributed to his lust for Nahoka, and Gregorio entered the dispute not as the ruler of the neighbouring chiefdom of Menga but as a friend of Sapapula. The interpretation of what is a political conflict as a quarrel between individuals may be explained as being due to the relatively limited nature of the role of chief (Lusase) and of traditional headman (Sapapula) which therefore do not predominate in the social status of the individual. (In this particular case, had I got Lusase's viewpoint he would probably have said that he was defending his dignity as chief, whereas Sapapula did not regard Lusase as being really chief.) The lack of a formal court system or even of an articulated political system at the local level has brought into desuetude the old legal and political idioms and the Ovimbundu have not yet learnt new terms from the Portuguese.

5. *Social Control and Social Structure in the Disputes*

I now return to the points mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It is hardly necessary to underline the decayed state of the traditional system of authority. Lusase had, at the time of the quarrel between Guilherme and Paulo, expressed his

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

intention of staying out of the dispute, just in the same way as he said, when Ndonga's action was reported to him, that he did not know what went on in the villages. That is, Lusase disclaimed any general responsibility for maintaining law and order in the sub-chiefdom. He had turned up at the case before Justino and at the moot by Kapapelo's house, when Nahoka had pointed out that it was he, and not Kafelo, who was effectively chief. The very fact that such a remark could be made indicates a weakness in Lusase's position, and his lack of authority is further illustrated by his being but one of a crowd of would-be conciliators.

It was, indeed, Lusase's position with relation to Kafelo that brought about his quarrel with Sapapula. Lusase, on meeting Kafelo at Kapapelo's, had bowed to him, and must have been uneasily aware that public opinion held that Kafelo 'had finished', had completed the cycle of chiefly rites, whereas Lusase was just 'the *chefe de posto's* boy'. It is unlikely that there would be among the Ovimbundu developed forms of the situation reported from some colonial areas by which one person acts as chief or headman *vis-à-vis* the government while another is the real chief or headman with effective power over the people, if only because so much of the content of chieftancy today is simply post work. Yet a chief differs from a government headman precisely because of the surviving prestige which clings to the capital village, the skulls of the dead chiefs, the titled ministers, and the drums, and it was such an expression of prestige which Sapapula gave to Kafelo and denied to Lusase. Not surprisingly Lusase reacted to this sharp evidence of the weakness of his position. In acting as he did, he made things worse; since he lacked any local means of imposing his will by force, or mobilizing moral support, he had to fall back on the post.

This weakening of the chieftancy is, of course, only part of the general disintegration of the old social system. Sapapula, in personality and prestige, was the equal of any traditional headman in the neighbourhood, and was consulted by the chief and government headmen when fines or roadworkers were required from Epalanga. Yet it was Paulo and not Sapapula who launched the attack on Guilherme, an attack speedily supported

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

by other villagers. Nor does residence in a village or sub-chiefdom compel or limit participation in a dispute. Neither Ndjoleya nor any of his kin participated in the dispute between Paulo and Guilherme. Gregorio came from Menga to support his friend Sapapula against Lusase, acting as a private individual, and not as the chief of Menga intervening in the internal politics of a neighbouring sub-chiefdom.

The social institutions participated in exclusively by Ovimbundu (i.e. the system of kinship and marriage and the local organization) do not provide machinery for resolving disputes. Therefore, binding decisions must be obtained from a representative of the 'civilized' society, and much importance attaches to setting out the details of the case in such a way as to gain the interest of this representative. It would seem likely from this that all cases will pass into the hands of the *chefe*, and that those 'natives' who are most closely linked to the post—the chief and the government headmen—will therefore be the most influential people in indigenous society. In fact, as the disputes show, this does not happen. Cases are taken to other 'civilized' persons—the priest Antonio Pires and the *soi-disant assimilado* Justino—and Lusase, instead of making up on the bureaucratic roundabouts what he has lost on the traditional swings, falls heavily off both.

The willingness of villagers to submit their cases to Justino and the mission rather than to the post is a result of the much closer personal contact which exists with them, and their lack of direct punitive sanctions. Any case referred to the *chefe* is thought liable to produce uncertain consequences. It was because of this that the people of Gumba did not dare to complain to the post about Lusase's usurpation; for this reason, too, Guilherme, knowing the *chefe* trusted him no more than any other native, sought reconciliation before getting to the post. The chief and government headman neither enjoy official confidence nor control access to the post.

On the level of the total Angolan society the State is obviously more powerful than the Church. On the local level the chief and government headmen have more executive power[11]

[11] The capacity to give orders backed by force; but this only applies to orders received from the post.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

627 than the catechists and 'elders of the school'; yet the weakness
648 of the agents of the post before a local opposition led, not by
797 such traditional figures as Kafelo and Sapapula, but by the school functionaries, has been demonstrated. The post accepts intervention by the mission in supporting disputants, and the mission is ready to help not only its disputants but any native who has a strong case—that is, it has a generalized relation of patronage to all natives.[12] Hence, since in a serious dispute people look round for a 'civilized' patron, the mission is the one most likely to be appealed to, and these appeals usually go through its local agents.

648 While the symbiosis of two societies, one ruling, the other
571 ruled, is a common feature of modern Africa, the extremely limited nature of the role delegated by the administration to the native authority, the 'patron-client' tie linking 'civilized' persons to the natives, and the opportunity given to patrons to intervene in cases before the *chefe*, seem to be distinctive features of Portuguese colonization.[13]

578 The third aspect of the social structure mentioned in the
602 introductory section was the role in disputes of kinship ties. It has been earlier noted that Sapapula's supporters regarded him as a victim of a concerted alliance by Guilherme, Kapapelo, Lusase, and Ndonga. In fact Lusase had avoided getting involved in the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo, had supported Sapapula against Kapapelo, and had disclaimed responsibility for Ndonga's act. The present social structure is not one in which groups of kin habitually co-operate;[14] and it is possible that this belief in a coalition against Sapapula reflects memories of the old social structure.

Kinship ties between individuals seem neither to restrain them from quarrelling nor to be liable to permanent disruption as a result of quarrels. By August 1956 Kasosi was once again

[12] It is felt in administrative circles that the advancement of the African is mainly the responsibility of the missions.

[13] Anybody who knows the Portuguese well will acknowledge the importance given to personal influence (*cunha*) and the lack of esteem for bureaucratic (in the Weberian sense) procedures.

[14] See Chapters IV and VII for details on the kinship cores and on general aspects of kinship. The support which Sapapula received was not confined to his own kinship core—thus Gregorio who enthusiastically supported Sapapula was not even a kinsman.